MARVEL TALES
THE STRANGEST STORIES EVER TOLD!
MARVEL TALES
DEC.
NO. 129
10¢
THE KEY TO ESCAPE IS IN THIS BAG! TRY IF YOU WISH, BUT REMEMBER... "YOU CAN'T TOUCH BOTTOM!"
ON SALE MONTHLY

YOU CAN'T TOUCH BOTTOM

ORIGINALLY PRESENTED IN MARVEL TALES #129

I DON'T KNOW WHERE A DEADBEAT LIKE YOU GOT SUCH A SNAPPY-LOOKING JACKET, BUT I DO KNOW WHERE YOU LIFTED THE STUFF THAT'S IN YOUR RIGHT POCKET!

QUICKLY THE POLICEMAN FRISKS THE SUSPECT! THE LEFT JACKET POCKET IS STITCHED TOGETHER AT THE TOP, BUT IT WAS INTO THE *RIGHT* ONE THAT THE INCREDIBLE ARRAY OF LOOT WAS POURED...

FIRST, I SEE HIM LOADING THAT POCKET WITH THINGS THAT JUST COULDN'T FIT INTO AN ORDINARY JACKET POCKET! AND THEN, WHEN I LOOK FOR THE STOLEN GOODS, THE POCKET'S EMPTY!

WITH SEEMING PERSISTENCE AND COMPLETE UNCONCERN, THE SEEDY-LOOKING SHOP-LIFTER CONTINUES HIS STRANGE ANTICS...

BEFORE THE BEWILDERED POLICEMAN'S GAZE, THE BUM PROCEEDS TO SHOVE MORE OBJECTS INTO A POCKET THAT HOLDS EVERYTHING AND NEVER SHOWS THE SLIGHTEST BULGE...

THE SILENT THIEF GOES PEACEFULLY TO HEADQUARTERS, BUT THERE THE MYSTERY INCREASES...

AGAIN AND AGAIN, THE STARTLED DETECTIVE PROBES INTO THE BOTTOMLESS POCKET, BUT THE END ELUDES HIS TOUCH...

BUT THIS POCKET HAS GOT TO END SOMEWHERE! GET RID OF THAT CHARACTER AND GIVE HIM A RECEIPT FOR THIS! I'M GONNA ASK TWO SCIENTIST FRIENDS TO CHECK THIS POCKET!
2

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

DOCTORS MORTON AND TENSER, TWO PROMINENT PHYSICISTS INVESTIGATE THE WEIRD JACKET, AS A YARDSTICK VANISHES INTO THE POCKET AND STILL DOES NOT TOUCH BOTTOM...

THERE'S ONLY *ONE* PLACE THINGS IN THIS POCKET CAN GO... INTO *ANOTHER SPACE DIMENSION!*

ANOTHER DIMENSION?

YES! THIS POCKET IS THE ENTRANCE INTO ANOTHER *AREA!* NO *TWO* THINGS CAN OCCUPY THE SAME SPACE... BUT AN OBJECT INSIDE THAT POCKET OCCUPIES SPACE IN *ANOTHER* DIMENSION AND VANISHES FROM *OUR* WORLD!

BUT HOW DID THAT POCKET GET HERE?

THE STITCHING IS ON THE *OUTSIDE*, ORDINARILY, A POCKET'S STITCHING IS MADE ON THE INSIDE! THIS POCKET WAS MADE INSIDE OUT!

THE JACKET WAS PROBABLY LEFT JUST ANYWHERE IN OUR WORLD! ITS MAKERS KNEW WHOEVER PICKED IT UP WOULD BE UNDER A *SPELL* TO FILL IT WITH OBJECTS FROM *OUR* WORLD THAT WOULD END UP IN *THEIRS!*

I CAN'T ACCEPT YOUR FANTASTIC THEORY, MORTON! LEAVE THE JACKET! WE'LL COME BACK TOMORROW AND CONTINUE THE INVESTIGATION!

BUT AS THEY START OUT OF THE ROOM, MORTON FINGERS THE LOCK...

DR. MORTON, SLAM THE DOOR SO THE ROOM'S LOCKED!

SURE, INSPECTOR! I'LL LOCK UP!

GLICK!

THAT NIGHT, DR. MORTON SNEAKS BACK TO THE OFFICE WHERE THE STRANGE JACKET WAS LEFT...

THE LATCH KEPT THE DOOR OPEN... THE JACKET'S *MINE!* IF *I* SOLVE THIS MYSTERY BY MYSELF, I MAY BE ABLE TO MAKE A FORTUNE FOR MYSELF!

I'M POSITIVE THIS POCKET IS AN ENTRANCE TO ANOTHER SPACE WORLD, AND THRU IT, I CAN ESTABLISH CONTACT WITH THEM!

I'LL RELEASE THE LATCH AND WHEN THE INSPECTOR COMES BACK IN THE MORNING, HE'LL HAVE ***ANOTHER*** MYSTERY TO SOLVE... HOW DID THE JACKET VANISH FROM A ***LOCKED*** ROOM!

LICK!

GOOD! IT FITS OVER MY OWN JACKET! I'LL WEAR IT OUT!

BUT ONCE THE PHYSICIST DONS THE JACKET, HIS BRISK STEP SLOWS TO A TRANCE-LIKE DRAG AND HE FINDS HIMSELF IN A DRUG STORE, COMPULSIVELY SHOPLIFTING EVERYTHING IN SIGHT...

CHILDREN'S TOYS

BILDIT BLOCKS

AGAIN AND AGAIN HIS HAND PLUCKS THINGS FROM THE COUNTER, STUFFING THE OBJECTS REGARDLESS OF SIZE INTO THE DEPTHLESS POCKET...

BUT SUDDENLY, HE PASSES A MIRROR AND SEES WHAT HE IS DOING! WITH A SUPREME EFFORT OF WILL, HE PULLS HIS HAND BACK FROM A COUNTER...

THERE ***IS*** A SPELL ON WHOEVER WEARS THIS JACKET! I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF IT BEFORE ***I*** AM PICKED UP FOR SHOPLIFTING!

THE POCKET SEEMS TO ACCEPT ***EVERYTHING***! BUT ***THEY*** MAY BE AFTER SOME ONE THING IN OUR WORLD AND WILL TAKE ANYTHING THAT COMES, ***UNTIL*** THEY GET THEIR PRINCIPAL OBJECT! I'LL KNOW MORE ABOUT ***THEM*** IF I CAN FIND ***WHAT*** THEY'RE ***REALLY AFTER***!

4

LIKE SHANG-CHI? THEN DON'T MISS **THE DEADLY HANDS OF KUNG FU!**

IN HIS ROOM THE PHYSICIST WORKS QUICKLY, TRYING EVERY OBJECT HE CAN THINK OF, AND STILL THE POCKET ACCEPTS EVERYTHING...

MAYBE THEY'LL ANSWER THIS MESSAGE ONCE THEY REALIZE SOMEONE HERE IS WISE TO THEIR GAME!

THE FISHING LINE STARTS DOWN INTO THE BOTTOMLESS POCKET AND VANISHES! FASTER AND FASTER, THE LINE UNRAVELS, SUDDENLY SNAPPING...

NO ANSWER! IT'S ALMOST MORNING! I HAVEN'T MUCH TIME BEFORE THE INSPECTOR WILL LEARN THE JACKET IS GONE! I'VE *GOT* TO FIND OUT *WHAT* THEY ARE WAITING FOR THERE!

SNAP!

I CAN JUST SQUEEZE MY HEAD INTO THE POCKET! WHEN MY EYES GET ACCUSTOMED TO THE DARK IN HERE, MAYBE I'LL BE ABLE TO SEE SOMETHING! I *MUST* LEARN *WHAT THEY'RE AFTER!*

BUT AS THE CURIOUS SCIENTIST PEERS INSIDE THE POCKET, TRYING TO LEAN IN FURTHER, SUDDENLY, HIS SHOULDERS FIT THRU THE OPENING AND HE BEGINS TO TOPPLE INTO THE ASTOUNDING POCKET...

AND BEFORE THE TERRIFIED SCIENTIST CAN STOP HIMSELF, HIS WHOLE BODY SLIPS INTO THE POCKET AND HE BEGINS TO FALL DOWN, DOWN, DOWN...

THAT AFTERNOON, HAVING DISCOVERED THAT THE JACKET IS MISSING AND FAILING TO REACH DR. MORTON BY PHONE, THE INSPECTOR USES THE PASS KEY...

LOOK! THERE'S THE JACKET!

YES, BUT *WHERE* IS *MORTON?*

WAIT! I'M NOT SURE THIS *IS* THE MYSTERIOUS JACKET! IT LOOKS LIKE IT, BUT THE *RIGHT* POCKET'S DIFFERENT... IT'S *GOT A BOTTOM!* THE LINING IS SEWN TOGETHER NOW!

THE ASSASSIN!

THEY'RE FOLLOWING ME! I KNOW WHO THEY ARE... SECRET AGENTS OF THE RUSSIAN ARMY! WHAT ARE THEY FOLLOWING ME FOR? WHAT HAVE I DONE?
TIME: 1951
THE HEIGHT OF THE COLD WAR, LONG BEFORE THE WORDS "PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE" AND "DETENTE" WERE EVER VOICED...

ORIGINALLY PRESENTED IN MARVEL TALES #129

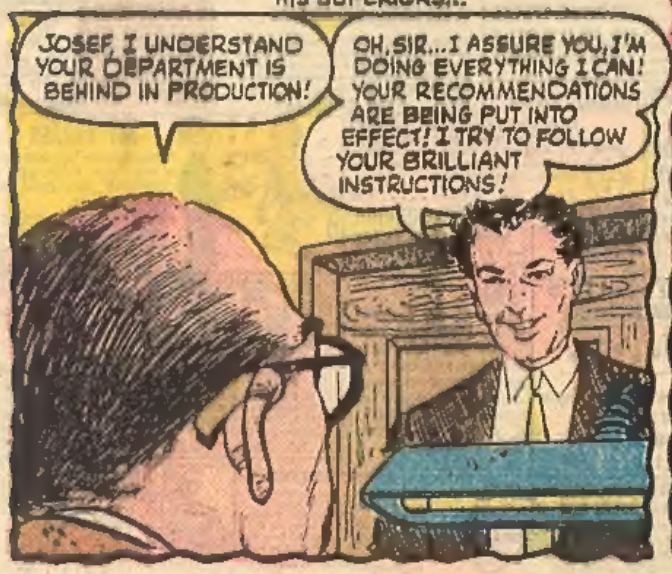
JOSEF SILOV LEFT HIS OFFICE LATE ONE AFTERNOON IN SEPTEMBER! HE WALKED DOWN NOVGOKOD AVENUE IN MOSCOW AND TURNED INTO A DESERTED STREET, BUT SOON HE SENSED THAT HE WAS NOT ALONE! AGENTS OF THE EXECUTION SQUAD WERE BEHIND HIM...

JOSEF WAS TERRIFIED! IT WAS NO USE TO RUN... THERE WAS NO ESCAPE FROM THESE MEN! AND THEN HE FELT GUNS PRESSING INTO HIS SIDE...

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

JOSEF HAD DEVELOPED A REPUTATION AMONG THE MEMBERS OF THE PARTY AS BEING A MEAN-TEMPERED BUREAUCRAT WHO DID NOT HESITATE TO TAKE OUT HIS FRUSTRATIONS ON THOSE WHO WORKED FOR HIM...

HIS ONLY DESIRE WAS TO WORK HIS WAY UP IN THE PARTY, AND HE TRIED TO PROVE HIS WORTH, BY FAWNING OVER HIS SUPERIORS...

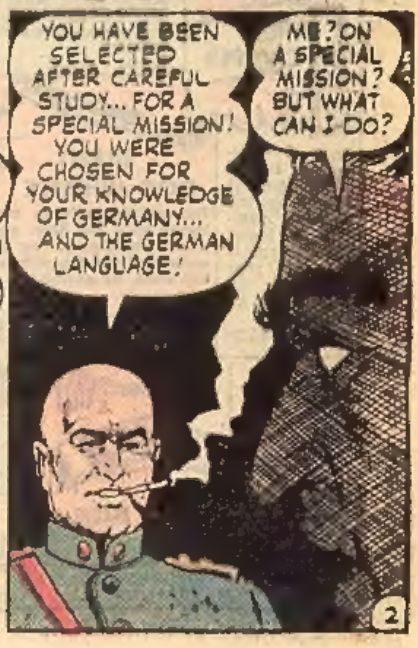

JOSEF, I UNDERSTAND YOUR DEPARTMENT IS BEHIND IN PRODUCTION!
OH, SIR...I ASSURE YOU, I'M DOING EVERYTHING I CAN! YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS ARE BEING PUT INTO EFFECT! I TRY TO FOLLOW YOUR BRILLIANT INSTRUCTIONS!

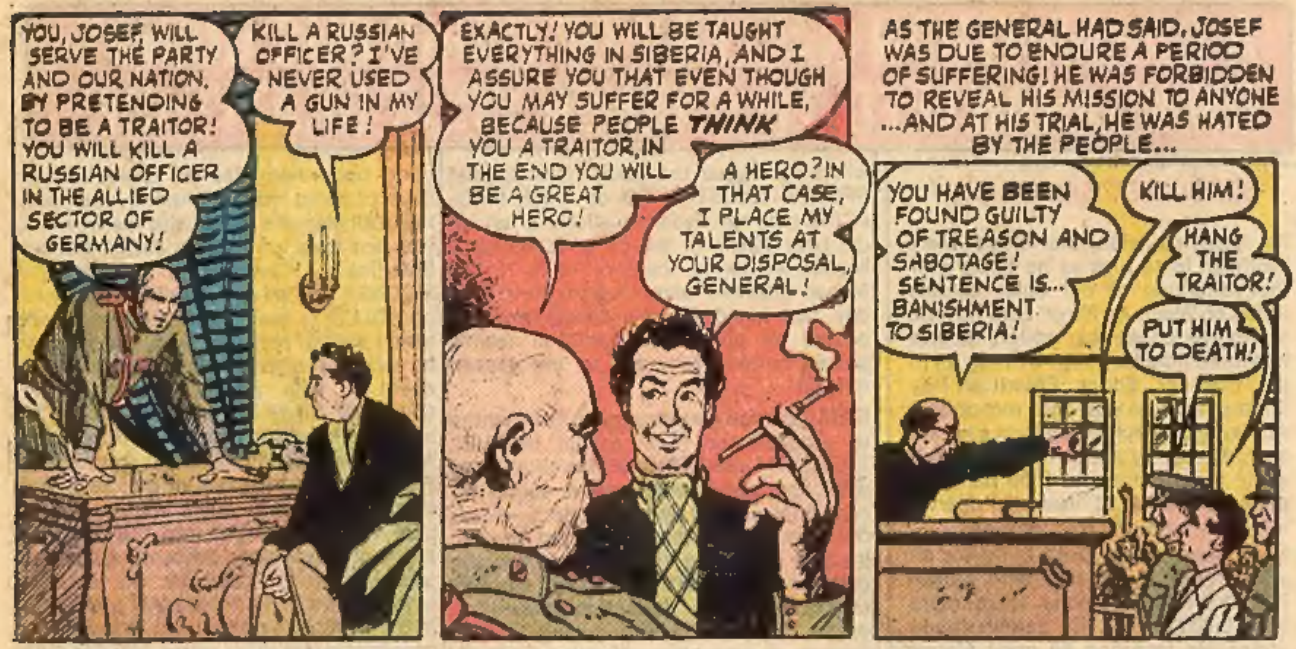
BUT WHEN HE IS ALONE, AND THE INTERVIEW IS OVER...

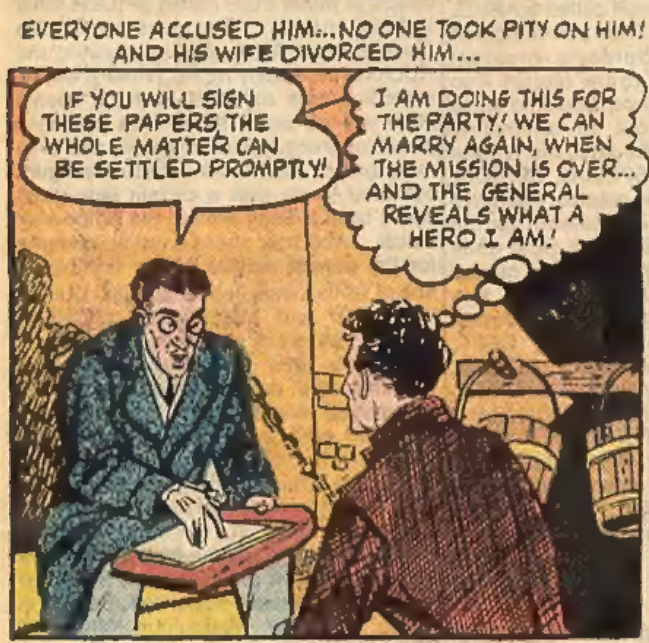
JOSEF FELT THE CAR SCREECHING TO A HALT! HE WAS TAKEN BY TWO MEN UP THE LONG MARBLE STEPS! HE STILL HAD NO IDEA WHAT WAS HAPPENING TO HIM...

SECONDS LATER, HE WAS USHERED INTO AN OFFICE AND LEFT ALONE! A VOICE BARKED OUT AT HIM TO REMOVE HIS BLINDFOLD! HE WAS SHOCKED AT WHAT HE SAW...

GENERAL YAYESLAV... I DON'T UNDERSTAND! I THOUGHT I WAS BEING TAKEN TO PRISON!
DON'T BE A FOOL, JOSEF! YOU'VE BEEN BROUGHT HERE ON IMPORTANT BUSINESS!


YOU HAVE BEEN SELECTED AFTER CAREFUL STUDY... FOR A SPECIAL MISSION! YOU WERE CHOSEN FOR YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF GERMANY... AND THE GERMAN LANGUAGE!
ME? ON A SPECIAL MISSION? BUT WHAT CAN I DO?


YOU, JOSEF, WILL SERVE THE PARTY AND OUR NATION, BY PRETENDING TO BE A TRAITOR! YOU WILL KILL A RUSSIAN OFFICER IN THE ALLIED SECTOR OF GERMANY!
KILL A RUSSIAN OFFICER? I'VE NEVER USED A GUN IN MY LIFE!
EXACTLY! YOU WILL BE TAUGHT EVERYTHING IN SIBERIA, AND I ASSURE YOU THAT EVEN THOUGH YOU MAY SUFFER FOR A WHILE, BECAUSE PEOPLE THINK YOU A TRAITOR, IN THE END YOU WILL BE A GREAT HERO!
A HERO? IN THAT CASE, I PLACE MY TALENTS AT YOUR DISPOSAL, GENERAL!
AS THE GENERAL HAD SAID, JOSEF WAS DUE TO ENDURE A PERIOD OF SUFFERING! HE WAS FORBIDDEN TO REVEAL HIS MISSION TO ANYONE ...AND AT HIS TRIAL, HE WAS HATED BY THE PEOPLE...
YOU HAVE BEEN FOUND GUILTY OF TREASON AND SABOTAGE! SENTENCE IS... BANISHMENT TO SIBERIA!
KILL HIM!
HANG THE TRAITOR!
PUT HIM TO DEATH!


EVERYONE ACCUSED HIM...NO ONE TOOK PITY ON HIM! AND HIS WIFE DIVORCED HIM...
IF YOU WILL SIGN THESE PAPERS THE WHOLE MATTER CAN BE SETTLED PROMPTLY!
I AM DOING THIS FOR THE PARTY! WE CAN MARRY AGAIN, WHEN THE MISSION IS OVER... AND THE GENERAL REVEALS WHAT A HERO I AM!

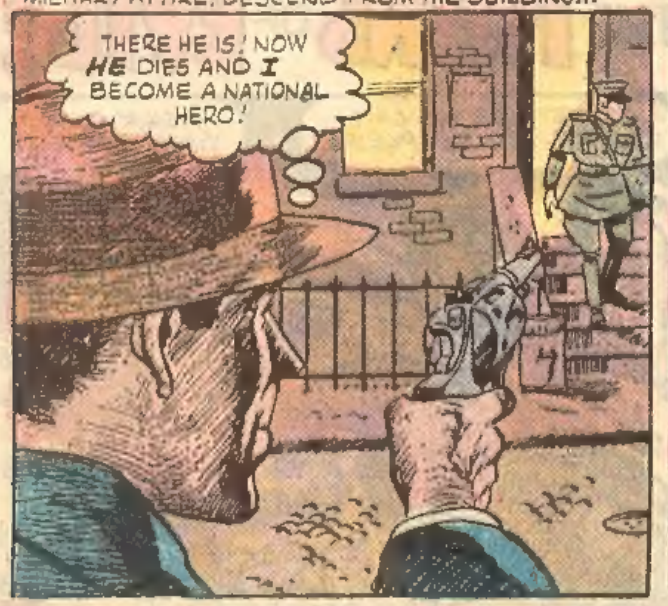
AFTER SEVERAL WEEKS, JOSEF WAS REMOVED FROM HIS CELL TO A TRUCK WHICH WAS TO TAKE HIM ON THE FIRST LEG OF HIS JOURNEY TO SIBERIA, WHERE HE WOULD BEGIN HIS TRAINING...
THERE'S YOUR FATHER...LOOK AT HIM! A TRAITOR TO HIS COUNTRY!
IT WILL ALL HAVE BEEN WORTH IT WHEN I RETURN A HERO! THEY WILL LEARN THE TRUTH SOMEDAY!

AFTER A MONTH IN SIBERIA, JOSEF FOLLOWED THE PLAN THAT HAD BEEN MADE FOR HIS ESCAPE TO EAST GERMANY, AND FROM THERE HE MADE HIS WAY INTO THE ALLIED SECTOR...
OKAY, KEEP THE LINE MOVING! YOU MUST BE GLAD TO GET OUT OF THAT COMMIE SECTION!

AT LONG LAST, JOSEF ARRIVED AT THE SPOT WHERE HE HAD BEEN INFORMED HE WOULD FIND THE RUSSIAN OFFICER HE WAS TO MURDER! ONE WELL-PLACED SHOT, AND HIS MISSION WOULD BE AT AN END...
HE SHOULD COME OUT THAT DOOR IN A FEW MINUTES...AND THEN WE'LL BE ABLE TO BLAME THE ALLIES FOR A MURDER THAT WAS PLANNED IN THE KREMLIN!
3

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

A FEW SECONDS LATER, JOSEF SAW A MAN IN RUSSIAN MILITARY ATTIRE, DESCEND FROM THE BUILDING...



A FEW SECONDS AFTER THE SHOTS WERE FIRED, JOSEF FOUND HIMSELF BEING CHASED BY TWO BRITISH SOLDIERS WHO HAD BEEN NEARBY...

THEY'RE FOOLS IF THEY THINK I'M GOING TO LET MYSELF GET CAUGHT NOW...AFTER ALL I'VE BEEN THROUGH! WHEN I CATCH THAT TRAIN BACK TO RUSSIA, I'LL BE THE GREATEST HERO IN THE LAND!

AFTER ELUDING HIS PURSUERS, IT WAS NOT DIFFICULT FOR JOSEF TO WORK HIS WAY BACK TO THE TRAIN THAT WAS TO TAKE HIM HOME...

NOW THE RUSSIAN EMBASSY WILL BE ABLE TO ACCUSE THE BRITISH OF MURDERING A RUSSIAN OFFICER! AND WE GET RID OF A TRAITOR AT THE SAME TIME! WHAT GENIUSES WE RUSSIANS ARE!

BUT JOSEF, IN HIS EXUBERANCE, DID NOT SEE THE TWO RUSSIAN SOLDIERS BOARD THE TRAIN AS THEY PASSED THE BORDER INTO SOVIET TERRITORY...

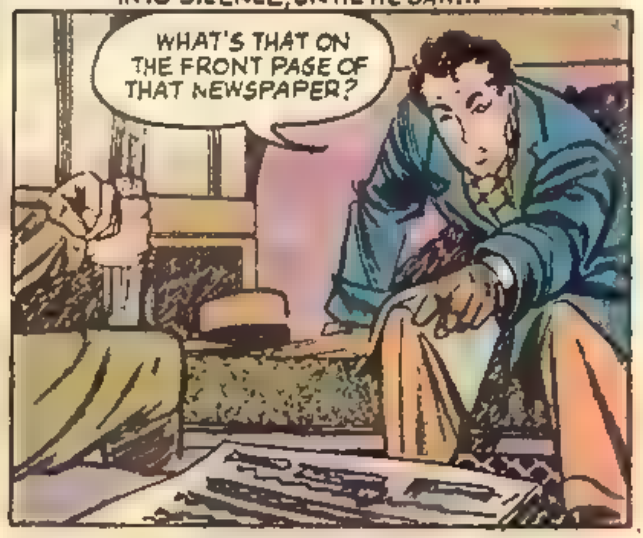
ALL RIGHT, JOSEF SILOV... YOU'VE BEEN CAUGHT, YOU FILTHY TRAITOR!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WHAT DO YOU WANT?
YOU WILL COME WITH US, SO YOU CAN BE PUT TO DEATH FOR TREASON AND MURDER!

JOSEF WAS REMOVED TO A SPECIAL CAR, WHERE HE COMPLETED HIS TRIP BACK TO MOSCOW BETWEEN TWO ARMED GUARDS. .

BUT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! THERE'S BEEN SOME MISTAKE! I'M NOT REALLY A TRAITOR! I ONLY PRETENDED TO BE!
YOU CAN TELL THAT TO THE FIRING SQUAD!

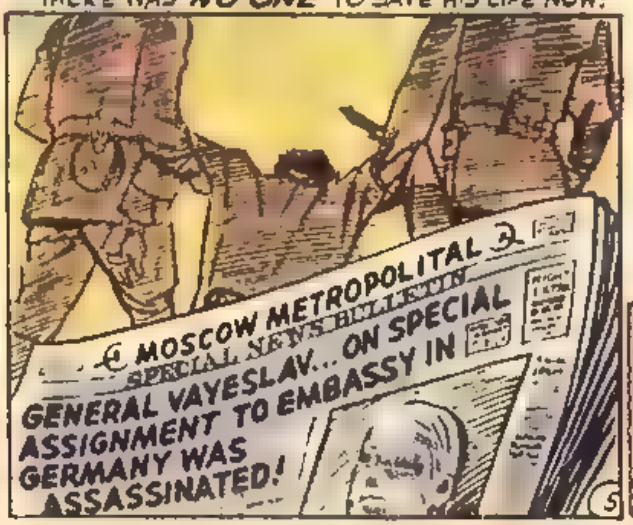
IT'S ALL A MISTAKE! TAKE ME TO GENERAL VAYESLAV! HE'LL TELL YOU WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT! HE'S THE ONE WHO TOLD ME TO DO IT! TAKE ME TO THE GENERAL!
HE'S MAD DON'T PAY ANY ATTENTION TO HIM!

NOTHING THAT JOSEF COULD SAY CONVINCED THE SOLDIERS HE WAS NOT THE TRAITOR THEY THOUGHT HIM TO BE! HE PLEADED IN VAIN AND THEN FELL INTO SILENCE, UNTIL HE SAW...



SUDDENLY, JOSEF LOST ALL CONTROL! IT BECAME CRYSTAL CLEAR ..THE IRONY, THE INSANE HORROR OF IT ALL!

THEY DRAGGED JOSEF OFF THE TRAIN AT MOSCOW, SCREAMING LIKE A MADMAN! THE STRAIN OF ALL HE'D GONE THROUGH FOR THE PARTY HE SERVED, PRESSED ON HIS BRAIN! BUT IT WAS TOO LATE! THERE WAS **NO ONE** TO SAVE HIS LIFE NOW!


MOSCOW METROPOLITAL
SPECIAL NEWS BULLETIN
GENERAL VAYESLAV... ON SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT TO EMBASSY IN GERMANY WAS ASSASSINATED!

DOG-GONE!

LENNY SAGER IS A WRITER! BUT THE ONLY WAY HE CAN PROVE IT IS BY THE REJECTION SLIPS WITH WHICH HE HAS WALLPAPERED HIS TINY BOARDING HOUSE ROOM! LENNY IS AMBITIOUS, INTELLIGENT, AND HE WORKS HARD AT WRITING, BUT IT SEEMS THAT HE JUST CAN'T SELL A STORY!

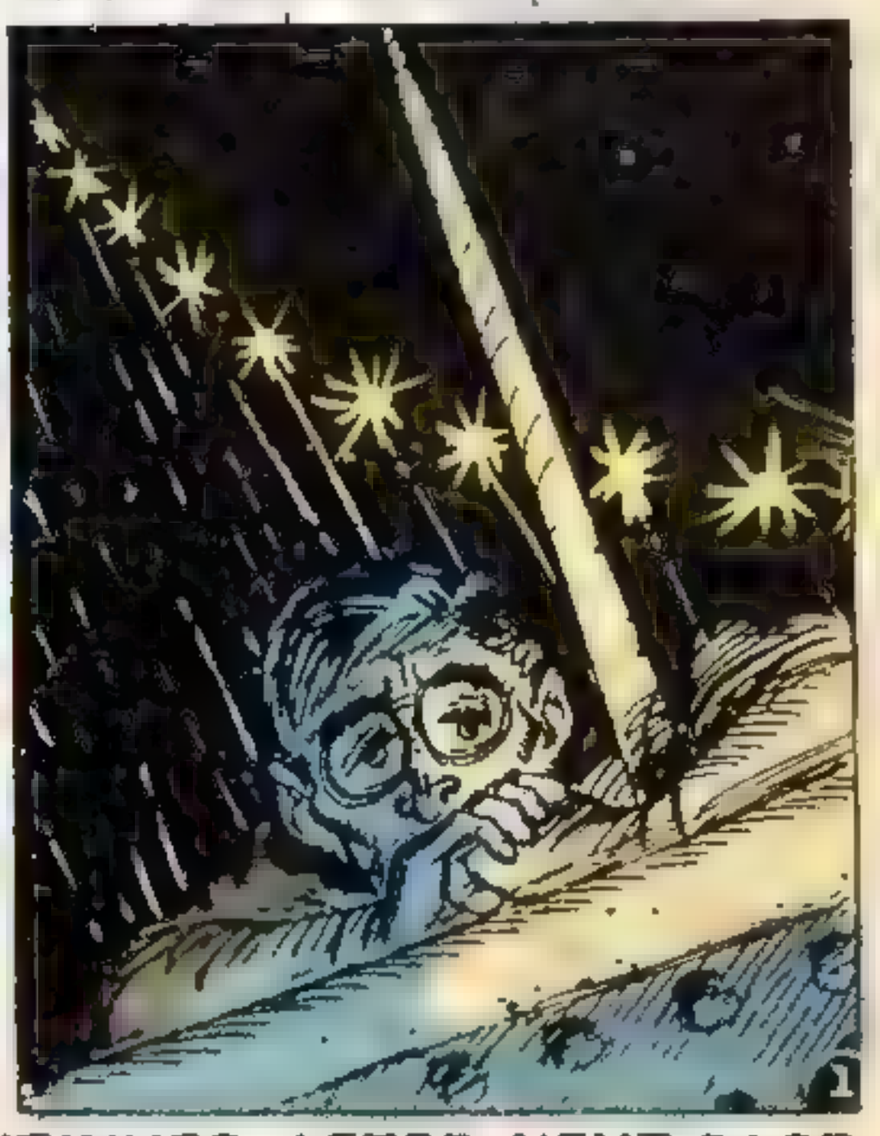
NO! IT'S LIKE ALL THE JUNK YOU WRITE! IT'S NO GOOD! TAKE IT AND GET OUT! AND STAY OUT!
YOU... YOU MEAN, MR. FOSTER, YOU DON'T LIKE IT?
J.M. FOSTER EDITOR

ORIGINALLY PRESENTED IN MARVEL TALES # 129

THIS IS HOW MR FOSTER ANSWERS THAT'

LENNY SAGER LIMPS AWAY AND EVERY CLICK OF HIS WORN-OUT HEELS ON THE DARK CORRIDOR'S STONE FLOOR JEERS H.M!

HE WANDERS THRU THE CITY UNTIL NIGHT ERASES THE SKYLINE, THEN HE PAUSES ON A BRIDGE AND STARES AT HIS MISERABLE REFLECTION.



CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

AFTER MUCH DELIBERATION, LENNY SAGER MAKES A DRASTIC DECISION, HE TURNS AND HURRIES AWAY...

YES, I'VE GOT TO DO IT!

HE THREADS HIS WAY THRU ALLEYS STAINED WITH DARKNESS!

NOTHING CAN STOP ME NOW!

HE CLIMBS A STAIRCASE THAT COMPLAINS WITH NERVE-TWISTING CREAKS!

IT'S THE ONLY WAY!

HE ENTERS HIS ROOM AND WITH GNARLED FINGERS APPROACHES THE MONSTER THAT BETRAYED HIM!

YOU'LL NEVER TYPE ANOTHER REJECTED STORY AGAIN!

LENNY SUPPRESSES HIS URGE TO SMASH THE MACHINE AGAINST THE WALL. BUT NOT HIS DESIRE TO GET RID OF THE TYPEWRITER AND FORGET ABOUT BEING A WRITER!

I'VE BEEN BANGING AWAY ON THIS PORTABLE FOR YEARS, AND THIS'LL BE THE *FIRST* MONEY IT EVER MADE FOR ME!

HEY! LENNY!

PAWN SHOP

LOAN

IT'S ME! YOUR OLD WRITER PAL, JOE KING! DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE GOING TO HOCK YOUR MACHINE?

YES, JOE... I'M GIVING UP WRITING! I'M A FAILURE! BUT YOU LOOK *GREAT!* MUST BE SELLING STORIES, HUH?

PAWN

YOU BET YOUR LIFE I AM, PAL! AND *YOU* CAN DO IT TOO!

I CAN!

SURE, LENNY! ALL YOU NEED IS *INSPIRATION!* LIKE A GIRL FOR INSTANCE... OR A WIFE! I USED TO GET REJECTIONS LIKE YOU TILL I MARRIED JANE... AND BINGO, NOW I SELL EVERYTHING I WRITE!!

IS THAT SO?

HIS PAL OFFERS LENNY A FEW BUCKS, BUT LENNY IS SATISFIED WITH THE ADVICE!

HE'S RIGHT! I NEED *INSPIRATION!* I MUST MEET A NICE GIRL AND *FALL IN LOVE!*

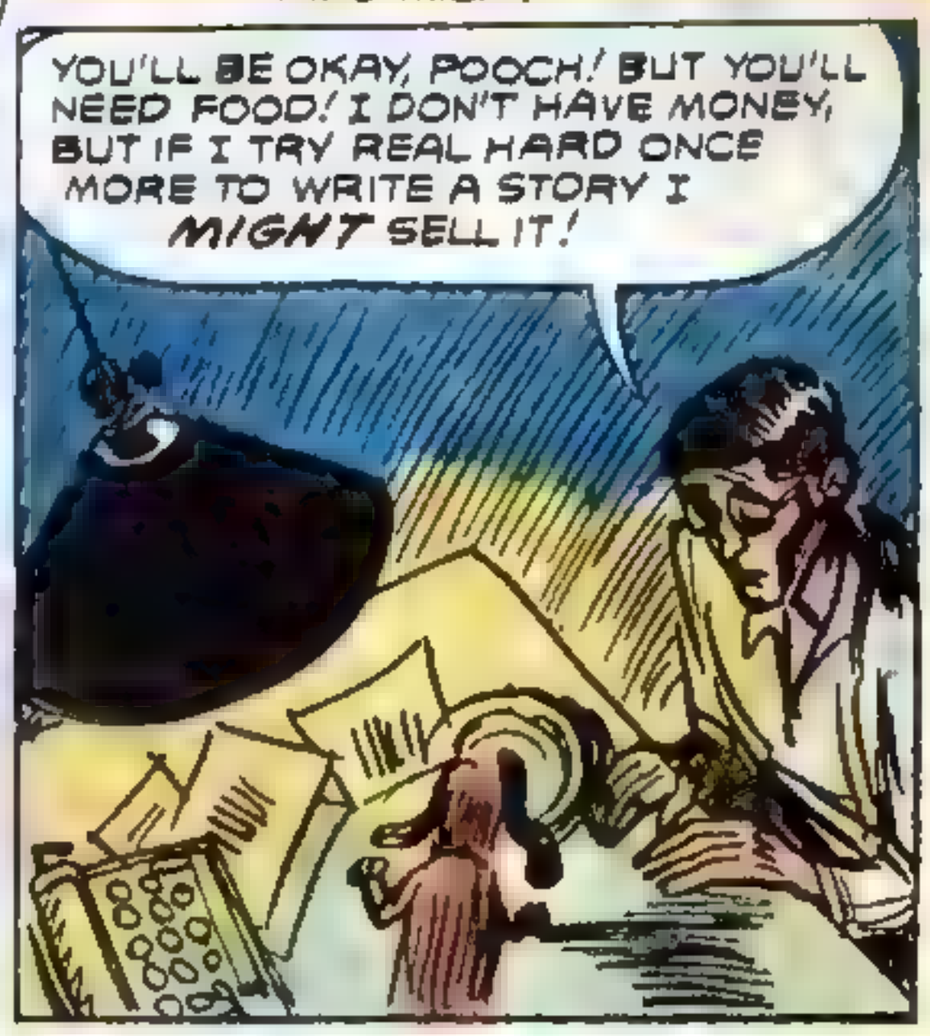
CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

BUT POOR HALF-STARVED LENNY IS A MISERABLE-LOOKING FIGURE IN HIS OLD BAGGY SUIT, AND HE DISCOVERS THAT FINDING A GIRL IS EVEN MORE DIFFICULT THAN SELLING A STORY! LENNY ISN'T ANY GIRL'S TYPE, AND ALL HE GETS FOR HIS EFFORTS IS EXACTLY WHAT HE GOT FOR HIS STORIES...

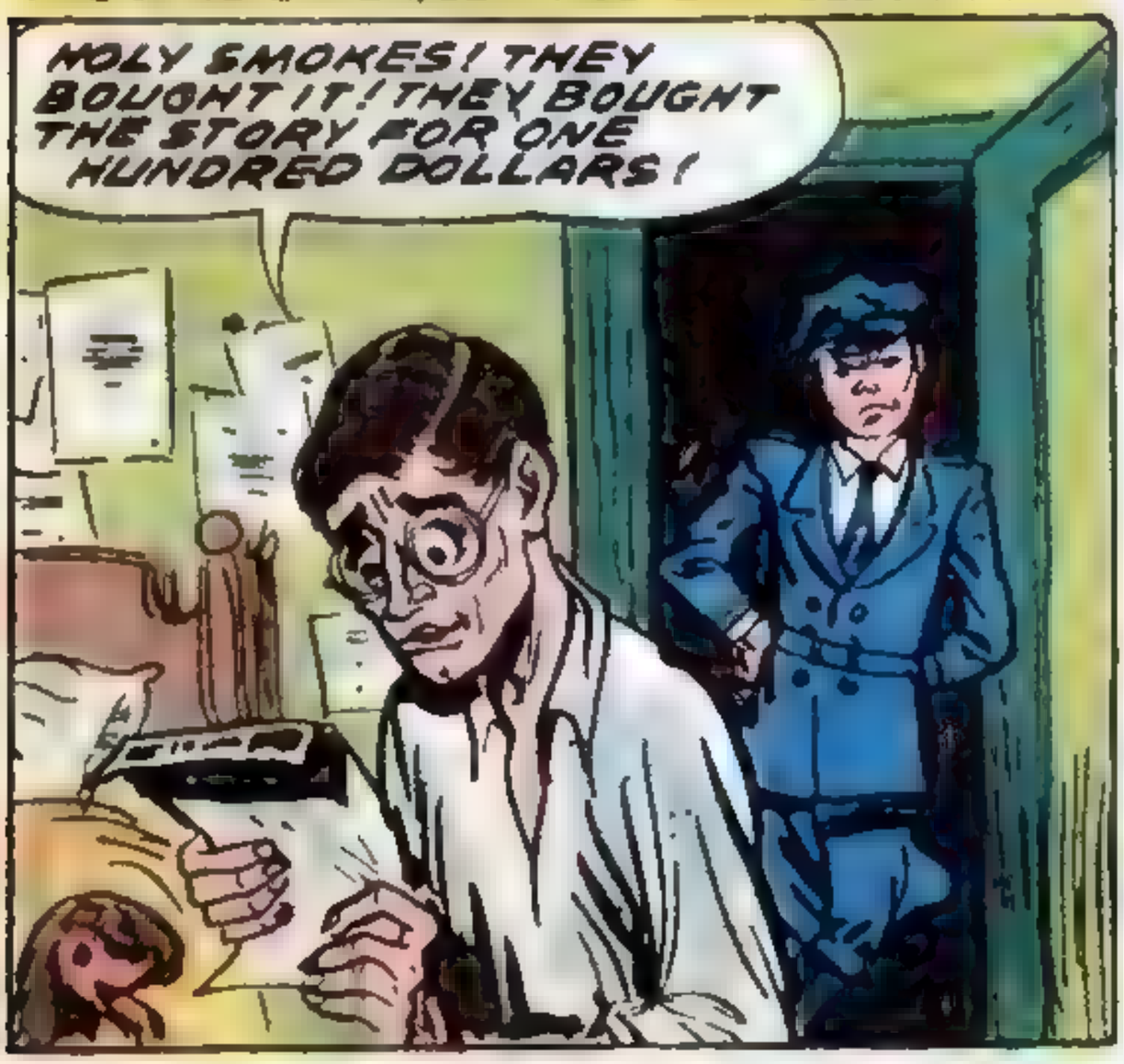
REJECTIONS!

REJECTED AND DISILLUSIONED, LENNY HIDES HIS TEARS IN THE CLOAK OF NIGHT! HE'S SURE NOBODY CAN FEEL MORE MISERABLE THAN HE... SUDDENLY HE HEARS A MOURNFUL WHIMPER CRAWL OUT OF THE DARKNESS...

AND IN HIS ROOM LENNY TAKES CARE OF THE LITTLE ANIMAL, SHARING WITH HIM HIS MEAGER SUPPER OF CRACKERS AND MILK!



TWO DAYS LATER, LENNY GETS A TELEGRAM!



WE'RE IN, POOCHY PAL! MY LUCK CHANGED WITH YOU! I'M NEVER GOING TO LET YOU GO! WHOEVER SAID THAT A MAN'S BEST FRIEND IS HIS DOG, SURE SAID A MOUTHFUL!
ARF!
TELE
3

ANOTHER STORY SELLS... THEN ANOTHER! AND THE CHECKS COME IN FASTER THAN THE REJECTION SLIPS USED TO!

NOW WE CAN AFFORD TO MOVE OUT OF THIS DUMP, POOCH!

ARF!

THEN LENNY GETS NEW CLOTHES AND SO DOES HIS DOG!

I'LL TAKE IT! AND MAKE ONE FOR THE POOCH FROM THE SAME FABRIC!

LENNY EATS IN THE BEST RESTAURANTS AND SO DOES HIS DOG!

ANOTHER STEAK FOR MY POOCH!

ARF!

LENNY EVEN FINDS A GIRL AND GETS MARRIED! AND THE DOG GOES ON THE HONEYMOON!

ARF!

LENNY'S WIFE DOESN'T LIKE THAT! AND AFTER THE HONEYMOON SHE DOESN'T LIKE THE IDEA THAT LENNY SPENDS MORE TIME WITH THE DOG THAN HE DOES WITH HER!

I'LL GET RID OF THAT HOUND! HE'S CRAZY ABOUT STEAK, AND TWO HOURS AFTER HE EATS THIS POISONED PORTION, HE'LL BE A ***DOG-GONE!***

HERE, POOCHY! TENDERLOIN STEAK PREPARED ESPECIALLY FOR YOU! ENJOY IT WHILE I GO TAKE A NAP!

POOCH

AFTER HER NAP, LENNY'S WIFE COMES DOWNSTAIRS TO VIEW WITH GREAT SATISFACTION THE DOG'S EMPTY DISH!

GOOD! IN A FEW MINUTES HE'LL DROP DEAD! THEN LENNY CAN DO MORE WORK AND MAKE MORE OF THAT GREEN STUFF I MARRIED HIM FOR! I'LL PEEK INTO HIS DEN AND SEE IF HE'S WORKING!

POOCH

YES, I HEAR HIS TYPEWRITER GOING AND HE... BUT... BUT... ***OH! OH-H-H-H!***

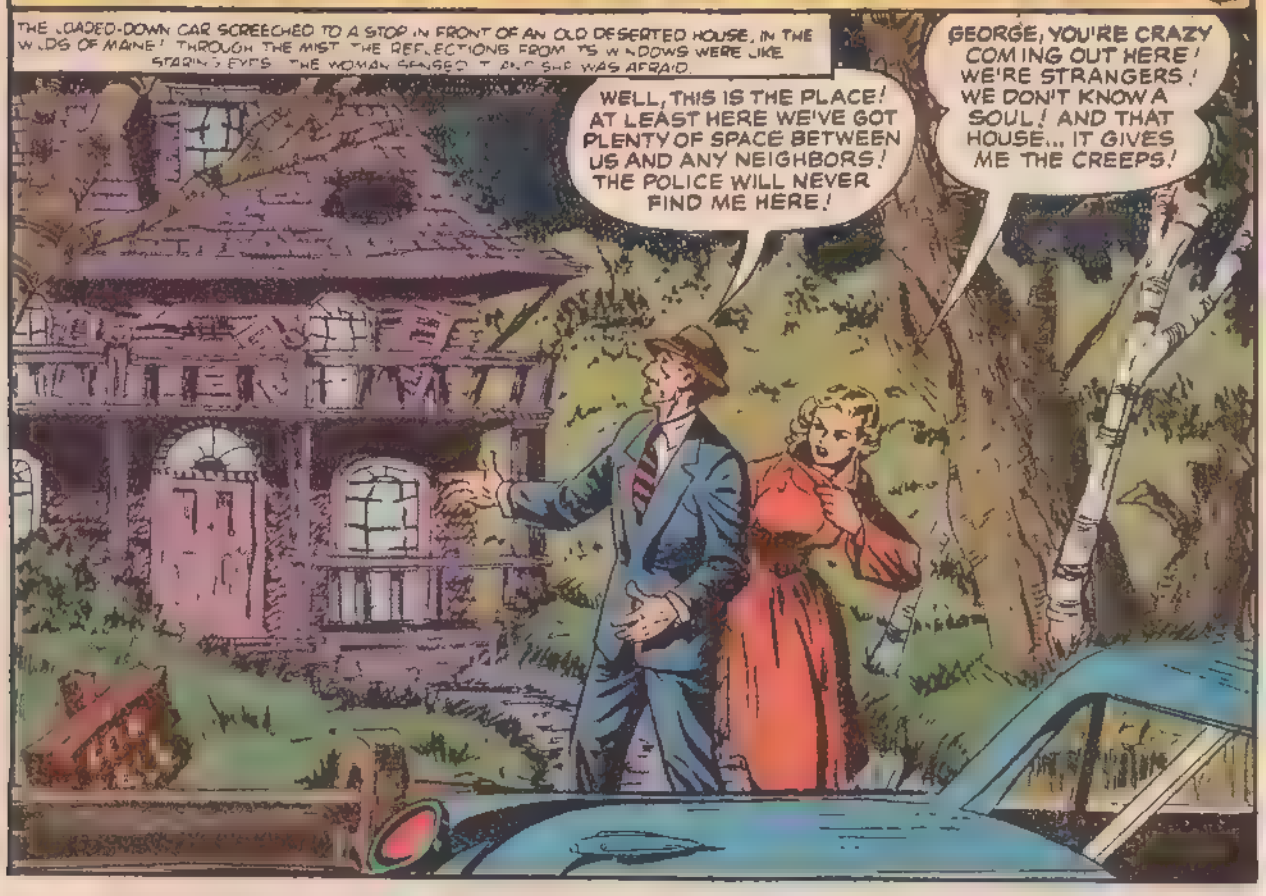
SHE'LL BE ALL RIGHT AFTER SHE COMES TO, POOCHY! I GUESS I SHOULD HAVE TOLD HER THAT ***YOU ARE THE ONE WHO'S*** BEEN WRITING ALL THE STORIES I SELL!

ARF!

THE END

Stan Lee PRESENTS: BEWARE! THE MONSTERS ARE COMING!™

THE HELPING HAND!


THE LOADED-DOWN CAR SCREECHED TO A STOP IN FRONT OF AN OLD DESERTED HOUSE, IN THE WILDS OF MAINE! THROUGH THE MIST THE REFLECTIONS FROM ITS WINDOWS WERE LIKE STARING EYES. THE WOMAN SENSED THAT SHE WAS AFRAID.
WELL, THIS IS THE PLACE! AT LEAST HERE WE'VE GOT PLENTY OF SPACE BETWEEN US AND ANY NEIGHBORS! THE POLICE WILL NEVER FIND ME HERE!
GEORGE, YOU'RE CRAZY COMING OUT HERE! WE'RE STRANGERS! WE DON'T KNOW A SOUL! AND THAT HOUSE... IT GIVES ME THE CREEPS!

INSIDE, THE SITUATION WAS THE SAME! THE HOUSE WAS OLD AND THE ROT HAD LONG WORKED INTO ITS WALLS...

I STILL THINK WE'RE MAKING A MISTAKE! I'D RATHER FACE PRISON THAN THIS!
DON'T BE SILLY, HONEY! ALL THIS JOINT NEEDS IS A LITTLE FIXING UP!

THE THING I LIKE BEST ABOUT IT IS THE FACT THAT WE'RE A LONG WAY FROM OUR NEAREST NEIGHBORS! NO BUSYBODY'S POKING AROUND!
WHAT'S THAT?

ORIGINALLY PRESENTED IN MARVEL TALES #124

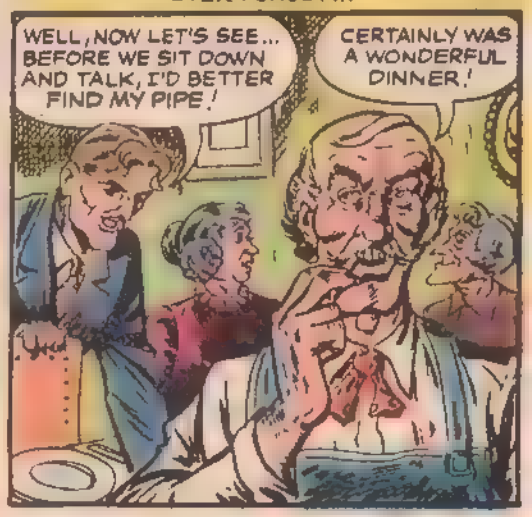
NOW, JEAN, DON'T TELL ME THAT SOMEONE WHO'S BEEN IN ON AS MANY DEALS AS YOU HAVE, IS AFRAID OF A LITTLE RAT!
I TELL YOU I DON'T LIKE THIS PLACE! THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THE WHOLE NEIGHBORHOOD THAT GIVES ME THE JITTERS!
DESPITE JEAN'S TEARS, THE COUPLE SETTLED DOWN IN THE OLD HOUSE! GEORGE WORKED ON THE PLACE TO MAKE IT LIVABLE AND IT SEEMED THAT HE HAD FOUND THE PERFECT HIDE-OUT...
WHAT'S THE TROUBLE NOW?
I'VE BEEN SO UPSET... I DIDN'T NOTICE THAT WE RAN OUT OF SUGAR THIS AFTERNOON!
WELL, THAT'S THE LAST STRAW! HERE I KNOCK MYSELF OUT TO SET US UP COMFORTABLY... AND YOU CAN'T REMEMBER TO DO THE SHOPPING!
IT'S THIS PLACE! I KEEP GETTING THE FEELING THAT SOMEONE'S WATCHING ME! IT'S HORRIBLE!
THE SILENT NIGHT WAS SHATTERED WITH THE ECHO OF A STRANGE AND UNFAMILIAR SOUND...
WHO THE BLAZES CAN THAT BE? THE POLICE HAVEN'T FOUND US ALREADY?
KNOCK! KNOCK!
HOWDY! I WAS PASSIN' BY THIS WAY, AND I KNEW YOU NEEDED SOME SUGAR, SO I BROUGHT THIS ALONG!
XXX SUGAR
IT'S UNCANNY!
I'M SCARED, GEORGE!
GEORGE NEVER FOUND OUT HOW THE NEIGHBOR KNEW OF THEIR NEED, BUT IT WAS EVEN STRANGER WHEN A WEEK LATER HIS WIFE RAN OUT OF FLOUR...
UNDERSTAND YOU FOLKS RAN SHORT OF FLOUR TODAY! MY WIFE SAID I SHOULD DRIVE OVER AND BRING YOU SOME!
IT'S INCREDIBLE! YOU LIVE SO FAR AWAY, AND YET YOU KNEW WHAT WE'RE SHORT OF!
FLOUR XXX
IT HAPPENED TIME AND AGAIN, WITH NO HINT OF HOW THE NEIGHBORS COULD KNOW WHAT WAS HAPPENING MILES AWAY! GEORGE WAS AT THE END OF HIS WITS...
I'M GOING OUT OF MY MIND! THESE PEOPLE AREN'T HUMAN! THEY MUST KNOW EVERYTHING WE DO AND SAY!
COFFEE
12

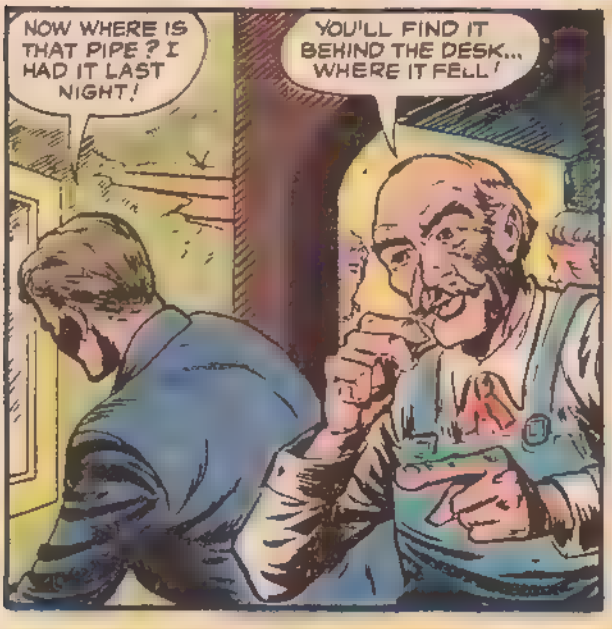
THOR AND HERCULES— BEFORE THE GATES OF HELL! DON'T MISS THIS LANDMARK ISSUE!

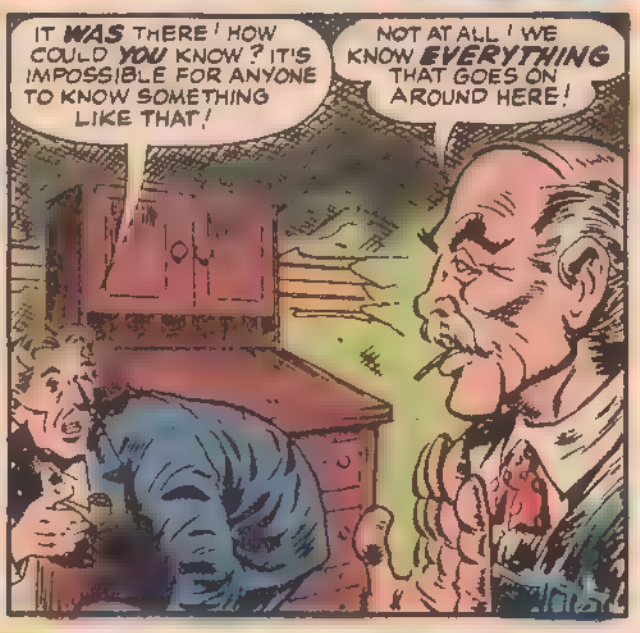
I'M SCARED, GEORGE! LET'S GET AWAY FROM THIS PLACE! MAYBE THEY KNOW ALL ABOUT US... MAYBE IT'S A TRAP!
NO! I'VE GOT TO FIND OUT WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT! THERE'S GOT TO BE A WAY TO GET IT OUT OF THEM!

I KNOW! I'LL INVITE A COUPLE OF THEM TO DINNER WITH THEIR WIVES AND WE'LL FIND OUT HOW THEY WORK THIS GIMMICK!
INVITE THEM HERE? IF THEY PULL ANY OF THOSE MIND-READING TRICKS, I'LL DIE!

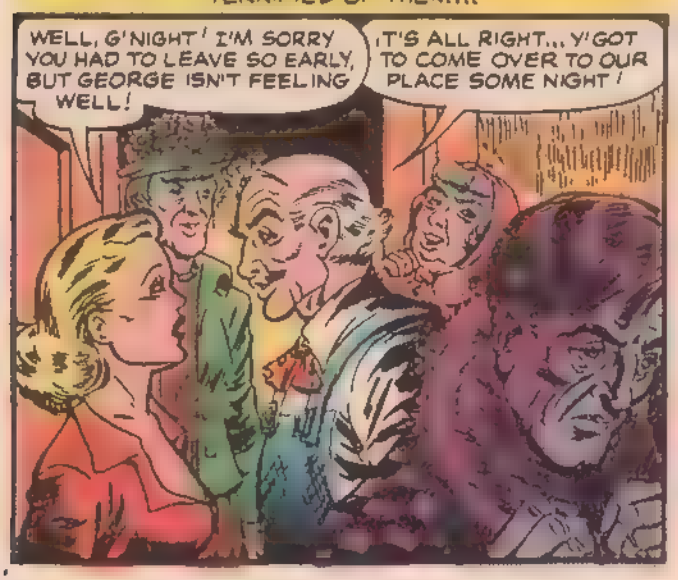
IGNORING JEAN'S FEARFUL PROTESTS, GEORGE INVITED HIS NEIGHBORS TO DINNER! WHAT STARTED OUT QUITE SIMPLY, TURNED INTO AN EVENT THAT NEITHER OF THEM WOULD EVER FORGET...

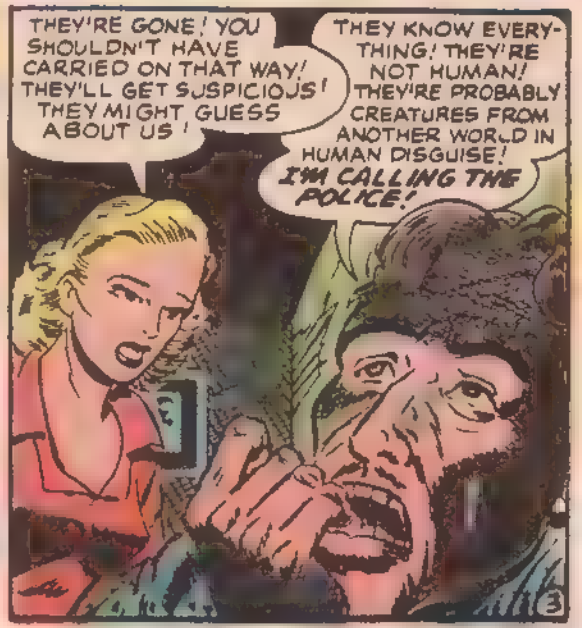





IT WAS THERE! HOW COULD YOU KNOW? IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANYONE TO KNOW SOMETHING LIKE THAT!
NOT AT ALL! WE KNOW EVERYTHING THAT GOES ON AROUND HERE!

FROM THAT POINT ON, GEORGE WAS UNABLE TO TALK TO HIS GUESTS! HE COULDN'T HIDE THE FACT THAT HE WAS TERRIFIED OF THEM...


WELL, G'NIGHT! I'M SORRY YOU HAD TO LEAVE SO EARLY, BUT GEORGE ISN'T FEELING WELL!
IT'S ALL RIGHT... Y'GOT TO COME OVER TO OUR PLACE SOME NIGHT!


THEY'RE GONE! YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE CARRIED ON THAT WAY! THEY'LL GET SUSPICIOUS! THEY MIGHT GUESS ABOUT US!
THEY KNOW EVERYTHING! THEY'RE NOT HUMAN! THEY'RE PROBABLY CREATURES FROM ANOTHER WORLD IN HUMAN DISGUISE!
I'M CALLING THE POLICE!

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

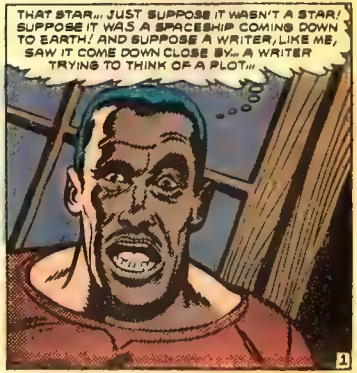
WITHIN HALF AN HOUR AFTER HIS CALL, THE POLICE HAD THE HOUSE SURROUNDED! GUNS WERE TRAINED ON EVERY DOOR AND WINDOW...
ALL RIGHT, GEORGE RIBBONS... WE'VE GOT THE PLACE BOXED IN! COME OUT WITH YOUR HANDS UP!
DON'T WORRY... I'M COMING OUT, UNARMED!
I SURRENDER! BUT YOU'VE GOT TO GET THOSE OTHERS... THEY'RE NOT HUMAN! PROBABLY FROM ANOTHER WORLD!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
THE NEIGHBORS! THEY'RE NOT HUMAN! THEY CAN TELL WHAT'S GOING ON IN ANOTHER PLACE! THEY'RE DANGEROUS!
IT'S TRUE! I SENSED IT THE MINUTE WE CAME HERE!
AFTER TELLING THE POLICE CHIEF ALL THE HAPPENINGS OF THE PAST TEN DAYS THE POLICEMAN THOUGHT DEEPLY FOR A LONG TIME! THEN HE TURNED TO ONE OF HIS MEN.
OKAY, ROBBINS... WE'LL SEE! HANK, GIVE ME THAT PAIR OF BINOCULARS!
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH THEM? THERE'S NO TIME TO WASTE!
HMMM... JUST AS I THOUGHT! YOU'D BETTER TAKE A LOOK FOR YOURSELF!
WHAT DO YOU SEE UP THERE? HAVE THEY CHANGED THEIR SHAPES OR SOMETHING?
YOU GOT YOURSELF ALL WORKED UP FOR NOTHING! CITY PEOPLE DON'T KNOW THAT IN THIS SMALL TOWN, EVERYONE CHECKS UP ON HIS NEIGHBORS THAT WAY!
NO! IT CAN'T BE!
I'VE BEEN TRICKED! I'VE BEEN FRAMED! YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO ME! LET ME GO!
NOBODY TRICKED YOU BUT YOURSELF, ROBBINS! YOU JUST WEREN'T USE TO LIVING NEAR FRIENDLY PEOPLE!
THE END
4

JUST SUPPOSE...

HE WAS A WRITER UP HERE IN A CABIN IN THE WOODS, FAR AWAY FROM THE CITY WHERE HE WAS GROWING STALE! HE STILL COULDN'T THINK OF A STORY PLOT! BUT HE WOULD SOON...OH, YES, HE WAS RIGHT ON THE BRINK OF A TERRIFIC STORY...

ORIGINALLY PRESENTED IN MARVEL TALES #129

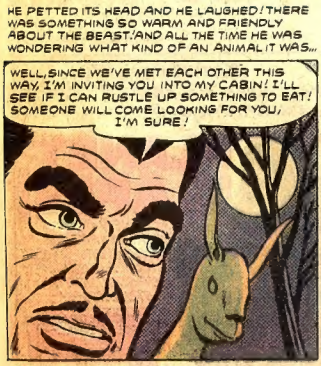
HE STOOD AT THE WINDOW, LISTENING TO THE WOODS' SOUNDS, LOOKING OUT INTO THE NIGHT! HE HAD TO GET AN IDEA... SOMETHING NEW, SOMETHING WEIRD, SOMETHING DIFFERENT...

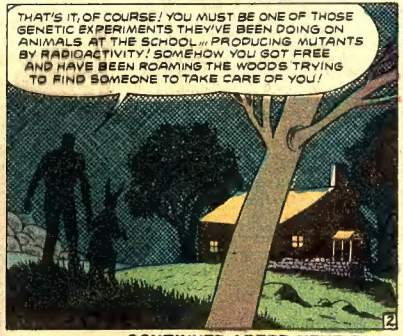

THAT STAR... JUST SUPPOSE IT WASN'T A STAR! SUPPOSE IT WAS A SPACESHIP COMING DOWN TO EARTH! AND SUPPOSE A WRITER, LIKE ME, SAW IT COME DOWN CLOSE BY... A WRITER TRYING TO THINK OF A PLOT...
1

HE'D HURRY OUT OF HIS CABIN IN THE WOODS... THE ONE HE RENTED TO GET AWAY FROM THE CITY... AND HE'D HURRY TOWARD THE SPOT WHERE THE SPACESHIP HAD LANDED...

THE OBVIOUS THING WOULD BE TO FIND THE SPACESHIP! BUT THAT'S TOO OBVIOUS! IT'S GOT TO BE SOMETHING ELSE...! BUT WHAT? I'M STUCK AGAIN!

THAT WAS WHEN HE HEARD THE RUSTLING IN THE UNDERBRUSH...
WOW, IT GAVE ME A START! BEGINNING TO BELIEVE MY OWN STORY! JUST A DOG! BUT IS IT JUST A DOG?


HE PETTED ITS HEAD AND HE LAUGHED! THERE WAS SOMETHING SO WARM AND FRIENDLY ABOUT THE BEAST! AND ALL THE TIME HE WAS WONDERING WHAT KIND OF AN ANIMAL IT WAS...
WELL, SINCE WE'VE MET EACH OTHER THIS WAY, I'M INVITING YOU INTO MY CABIN! I'LL SEE IF I CAN RUSTLE UP SOMETHING TO EAT! SOMEONE WILL COME LOOKING FOR YOU, I'M SURE!


THEN HE REMEMBERED THE AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL IN THE VALLEY AND THE STORIES IN THE NEWSPAPERS...
THAT'S IT, OF COURSE! YOU MUST BE ONE OF THOSE GENETIC EXPERIMENTS THEY'VE BEEN DOING ON ANIMALS AT THE SCHOOL... PRODUCING MUTANTS BY RADIOACTIVITY! SOMEHOW YOU GOT FREE AND HAVE BEEN ROAMING THE WOODS TRYING TO FIND SOMEONE TO TAKE CARE OF YOU!
2

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

HE FED THE BEAST AND IT ATE WITH A VORACIOUS APPETITE! IT EVEN ATE THE CANS THE FOOD CAME IN...

BOY, THEY REALLY GOT A MUTANT THIS TIME! LOOKS LIKE A DOG AND HAS THE APPETITE OF A GOAT! I'D BETTER CALL THE SCHOOL AND TELL THEM I FOUND YOU!

I FORGOT... NO PHONE! I'LL HAVE TO WALK DOWN IN THE MORNING! HAVEN'T HAD A DOG IN YEARS... ALWAYS LIKED THEM THOUGH!

IT SLEPT NEXT TO HIS BED THAT NIGHT, AND THERE WAS A COMFORTING IN IT TO HIM...

MAYBE THEY'LL LET ME KEEP YOU FOR A PET! I CAN SENSE THAT YOU LIKE ME JUST AS MUCH AS I LIKE YOU...

IN THE MORNING WHEN HE AWOKE, THE FIRST THING HE SAW WAS HIS PET! IT SEEMED TO HAVE GROWN DURING THE NIGHT...

EITHER YOU'VE GROWN OR I NEED NEW GLASSES! SAY, I HAD AN IDEA DURING THE NIGHT! JUST SUPPOSE THIS WRITER FOUND A STRANGE CREATURE... NOT A FREAK LIKE YOU, BUT A REAL BEING FROM ANOTHER PLANET AND HE TAKES IT HOME AND MAKES A PET OF IT...

HE WENT TO WORK ON HIS STORY! OF COURSE HE FORGOT TO GO DOWN TO THE INSTITUTE IN THE VALLEY... HE WAS TOO BUSY NOW! A STRANGE BOND SPRANG UP BETWEEN HIM AND THE CREATURE. AS THE DAYS PASSED, A SORT OF MUTUAL LOVE...

I'M STUCK AGAIN! JUST SUPPOSE THIS WRITER IN THE STORY *DID* BRING HOME THIS BEING HE FOUND, AND IT ATE EVERYTHING IN SIGHT AND GREW AT AN ALARMING RATE, JUST LIKE *YOU*! THEN WHAT? WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

I'LL LET IT REST FOR A WHILE! MEANWHILE, I'LL BUILD A CAGE FOR YOU! YOU'RE GETTING SO BIG, I'M AFRAID YOU'D SCARE SOMEONE TO DEATH IF YOU WENT WANDERING OFF!

NAILS

Y'KNOW, AS MUCH AS I LOVE YOU, I'M AFRAID I'LL JUST HAVE TO GO DOWN AND NOTIFY THE UNIVERSITY THAT I FOUND YOU! YOU'RE GETTING JUST TOO BIG TO KEEP AROUND... AND YOU EAT TOO MUCH, TOO!

BY NIGHTFALL, THE CAGE WAS FINISHED AND HE BROUGHT IT INDOORS AND PUT HIS PET IN IT. HE NOTICED THAT THE CREATURE HAD GROWN A LITTLE MORE SINCE THAT MORNING...

HEY, DON'T LOOK SO SAD! I'LL LET YOU OUT WHEN IT'S BEDTIME! GOLLY, I HATE TO PART WITH YOU! MAYBE THEY'LL LET ME KEEP YOU!

WELL, I'LL WALK DOWN TO THE VALLEY AND TELL THE FOLKS I'VE FOUND YOU... AND ASK THEM TO LET ME KEEP YOU!

HE HEARD THE WHIRRING NOISE AND HE LOOKED OUT THE CABIN DOOR! IT WAS ALMOST THE SAME AS IT HAD BEEN THAT FIRST NIGHT, WHEN HE'D FOUND HIS PET! THERE WAS THE SHOOTING STAR...

BUT STARS DON'T MAKE THAT KIND OF SOUND!

THE SHOOTING STAR VANISHED! THE WHIRRING STOPPED! THEN, OUT OF THE WOODS...

NO, IT CAN'T BE!

HE STOOD THERE IN A DAZE, AS THE CREATURES BRUSHED BY HIM AND WENT TO THE CAGE THAT HELD HIS PET...

THEY'RE UNFASTENING THE CAGE DOOR!

THEY'RE PROSTRATING THEMSELVES AS THOUGH HE WAS SOME KIND OF ROYALTY... A PRINCE OF SOME STRANGE RACE, JUST REACHING MATURITY!

WITH THEIR TENTACLES TENDERLY WRAPPED AROUND HIS PET, THE LED HIM OUT AND CLOSED THE DOOR BEHIND THEM...

IT... IT'S UNBELIEVABLE!

HE RUBBED HIS EYES! WAS HE DREAMING? THERE WAS AN EMPTY CAGE...

WAIT A MINUTE... THE STORY! THERE'S THE ENDING! THE SPACESHIP COMES BACK, THE CREATURES FROM ANOTHER WORLD COME FOR THEIR YOUNG PRINCE, THEN TAKE HIM AWAY...

AND IT'S TRUE! NO... IT WON'T DO! TOO TRITE! I'VE GOT TO HAVE A *TWIST* TO THE ENDING!

HEY! WAIT! PUT ME DOWN! I DIDN'T HARM YOUR PRINCE! WE WERE FRIENDS... I LIKED HIM... HE WAS MY PET!

THEY TOOK HIM INTO THE WOODS TO A... YES, IT WAS A SPACESHIP, AND WHAT WAS MORE INCREDIBLE, IT WAS A FLYING SAUCER!

HIS PET WAS THERE, TEARS STREAMING FROM ITS EYES, BUT SMILING AT HIM! IT HELD HIM CLOSE, MAKING CROONING NOISES AS THE SHIP ROSE FROM EARTH LIKE A METEOR...

AND THEN IT SPOKE, ITS VOICE HALTING, BUT KIND...

I... I COULD NOT LEAVE YOU! I LOVE YOU SO MUCH! I COULD NOT GO BACK TO MY HOME PLANET AND LEAVE MY PET BEHIND! I WILL LOVE YOU AND CARE FOR YOU WELL, MY WONDERFUL PET!

AND THEN A THOUGHT FLASHED ACROSS HIS MIND... A THOUGHT THAT BROUGHT A WRY SMILE TO HIS LIPS, CHECKING THE SCREAMS OF HYSTERIA THAT TREMBLED THERE

THE *PERFECT* ENDING... THE *TWIST* ENDING FOR THE STORY THAT WILL *NEVER* BE PUBLISHED! AND I'D HAVE CALLED IT... *"JUST SUPPOSE!"*